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Subject: PSIO SITREP UPDATE #9 – 7 Feb 2022 – Freedom Convoy Solidarity Activity

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ONLY: SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS SITUATION DEVELOPS. INFORMATION MAY BE BASED ON UNCONFIRMED REPORTING.

UPDATE #9

DATE/TIME: February 7, 2022 @ 1535 hrs

PURPOSE: To provide aggregated situational awareness regarding “Freedom Convoy” solidarity activity impacting Alberta.

BACKGROUND:

- Regional “Freedom Convoy” solidarity convoys (a.k.a. “Operation Bear Hug”), localized highway slowdowns, temporary barricades, and protest activities have occurred throughout since 29 Jan 2022.
- The COUTTS BORDER CROSSING and CHECK POINT 10 near MILK RIVER are currently the centre of gravity of ‘Freedom Convoy’ solidarity activity in Alberta. Participation in area remains fluid.
- Approximately 8 ‘Freedom Convoy’ solidary convoys converged on EDMONTON on Sat 5 Feb 2022. Temporary traffic disruptions occurred on ingress and egress routes. No encampment in EDMONTON CITY CENTRE occurred. Participants dispersed organically on Sat evening.
- A convoy along Stoney Trail and a significant dismounted peaceful march/protest occurred in Calgary on Sat 5 Feb. No significant issues reported.
- Some isolated convoy and protest activity occurred on Sun 6 Feb with extremely limited participation relative to Sat 5 Feb.
- Aggregate protest activity remained peaceful throughout weekend of 5/6 Feb. Counter protest activity was minimal and isolated.
- Root-level organizing continues to adapt relative to develops involving the COUTTS BORDER CROSSING and OTTAWA ‘Freedom Convoy’ activities.
- Level of future activity is likely to be contingent on policy developments regarding public health measures.
- Notwithstanding a significant catalyst event, general protest fatigue is likely to cause some decay in scope of future actions.

CURRENT STATUS:

Coutts Border Crossing

- RCMP report there was little or no change overnight. The number of trucks at the COUTTS southern point were a bit lower, and people at Checkpoint 10 had diminished a bit. A single lane remained open NB and SB.
- As of 09:00 hrs 7 Feb, RCMP/Sheriffs High Patrol (SHP) report:
 - 5 tractors along with 5 support vehicles drove around the blockade at Checkpoint 5 (TWP.5/Hwy.11A) and stopped at the Smugglers Saloon in Coutts. There were no reported injuries.
 - Traffic is flowing at an increased rate to approximately 1 minute wait times through Checkpoint 10 (Checkpoint 10 is the main obstruction to traffic flow).
 - CBSA is reporting traffic volume through the boarder is now at approximately 50% normal conditions
 - Indicators of another convoy forming with Coutts as the intended destination. [unconfirmed – no further details]
- As of 13:00 hrs 7 Feb, RCMP/Sheriffs High Patrol (SHP) report:
 - There has not been any major changes to traffic flow or the number of vehicles/people in the area and traffic continues to move through CP10.
 - RCMP have continued to permit fuel delivery to vehicles participating in the protests.
 - Protesters continue to set up their own infrastructure including food storage equipment and makeshift walking paths
 - A small convoy of 10 small vehicles and 12 tractors was reported in the Carway area. This has resurfaced concerns of protestors attempting to shut down Carway and Del Bonita boarder crossings. Sheriffs will deploy manpower to locations north of each site. They will first, provide immediate reporting and second, turn back any commercial vehicles involved in the protest.
 - SHP has moved 5 Sheriffs to a midnight shift on request from the RCMP
- A number of vehicles appear to have commenced a slow-roll convoy to the Piegan-Carway border crossing at approx 14:00 hrs Mon 7 Feb. [unconfirmed]
- Medicine Hat Police report registration has been set up seeking 1000 horseback protesters for upcoming weekend by 'Walsh, AB Freedom Riders' group. [This group was part of the estimated 300 'Alberta (Coutts) Freedom Riders 2022' who attended Coutts on Sat 5 Feb]
- On Sun 6 Feb, CBSA and US Border Patrol were not reporting any changes other than a small protest (approx. 4 people) on the US side. Social media indicates the possibility of a large scale convoy developing in the US. The convoy intends to travel from California to Washington.
- Online sources there appears to be ongoing tension between the leadership of the protests at Coutts and Milk River.
- Online group 'Rally 4 Resources – the Movement' is suggesting that between 12-15 plainclothes police officers were circulating amongst the protest crowds at the border.

Alberta Legislature / McDougall Centre

- Social media indicates convoy plan from Ponoka to Legislature on Tue 8 Feb; marshalling at Tim Hortons 09:00 with 10:00 departure. [unconfirmed]

City of Edmonton & Environs

- City of Edmonton reports 'Edmonton Slow Rollers' activity on Mon 7 Feb near Stony Plain Road, CBC and Courthouse. [This is believed to be daily 8-10 veh convoy EPS reported on 109 St. around 1400 hrs]

City of Calgary & Environs

- Social media indicates convoy planned to leave from Calgary on Fri 11 Feb towards Milk River and Coutts. The convoy will meet at the iFly in the Deerfoot City mall in Calgary and leave at approximately 18:00.

Regional Municipalities / Rural

- As of 10:42 hrs Mon 7 Feb, Medicine Hat Police report:
 - Consistent rally is occurring on 13 Ave SE outside the MLA office. MLA, Drew BARNES is in regular attendance at the rally. No issues reported. Nothing set up for counter protesting.
 - On Sun 6 Feb, a slow roll convoy from Walsh through Medicine Hat to Redcliff occurred. There are plans to be another one today (7 Feb) between Walsh and Irvine only. The group plans to coordinate further events. Group on Facebook is 'Walsh, AB Freedom Riders.' Members of this group were also present at the Coutts freedom rider event. There were no issues reported aside from slowing of traffic. This was not reported to police prior to them entering the city. There is also conversation on meeting up with others passing through the city heading to Coutts or Ottawa.
 - On Fri 4 Feb, Eagle Butte School had a non mask protest within the school. Parents and students entered the school as well as blocked the entrance for teachers videos on tiktok and snapchat. Reports there is plan for another demonstration today [7 Feb] RCMP will be on scene.
 - On Fri 4 Feb, a few students and parents protested outside the Catholic Board office. Non eventful and peaceful. Plans for this to continue every Monday throughout the Province, a walk out and protest outside the board offices.
- Supports in Fort McMurray appears to be organizing another convoy for Sat 12 Feb. [previous events have been relative small and localized to Fort Mac]
- At 09:00 hrs on Mon 7 Feb, a protest took place in Innisfail to protest mandatory masking of children in schools. Approximately 30-40 people attended.
- A protest on horseback in support of the convoys is planned for Rimbey on Sat 12 Feb.

Ottawa "Freedom Convoy 2022"

- The Ottawa Police Service has begun more direct enforcement action against those truckers that have not departed the city, including the dismantling of the supply depot setup as a central hub for food and fuel, interdiction of those attempting to assist in the resupply of fuel for vehicles and ongoing efforts to disrupt the means of funding for such activities.
- These actions will likely further provoke activities both in Ottawa and elsewhere, and encourage further demonstrations in Alberta.

Other Provinces / National

- Increasing support for “Freedom Convoys” being seen internationally, and similar convoys are being, or have been, organized in Australia, Austria, the United States, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. This is being picked up by convoy attendees, who are proclaiming that they have spearheaded a global movement, further encouraging their stances and willingness to continue engaging in protest actions.

MINISTRY UPDATES:

Justice & Solicitor General (JSG):

- Still no indication from Canada on the outcome of the request for aid to civil power / police.
[may have changed later in day]

Transportation (TRANS):

- The US CBP has been asked to continue with extended hours at Del Bonita for this week, or at least Monday to Wednesday and then reconsider. CBSA is awaiting response.

CARWAY – DAILY TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES (ON HIGHWAY 2, 2.3 KM NORTH OF US BORDER)	Two-Way	Southbound	Northbound
Average Weekday Traffic in January 2022	80	40	40
Monday, January 31, 2022	240	120	120
Tuesday, February 1, 2022	230	100	130
Wednesday, February 2, 2022	240	130	110
Thursday, February 3, 2022	260	140	120
Friday, February 4, 2022	250	140	110
Saturday, February 5, 2022	320	220	100

Municipal Affairs:

- No change.

Jobs, Economy, and Innovation (JEI):

- Retail Council of Canada report:
 - The Coutts border crossing is a critical supply route from the United States, especially for time sensitive perishables and non-perishable goods arriving into Alberta and distributed to store networks across the West.
 - While the reopening of the Coutts crossing is good news, the extended closure and slow down due to the blockades will have had a frustrating disruption to retailers and working long haul truck drivers.

- For grocery stores as an example - who are having to manage low supplies of fresh products that typically are picked, packed and shipped just in time to meet the needs of their customers – trucks having to be rerouted adds additional time and cost, and further strains on an already strained supply chain. Trucks sitting with perishables at Coutts for days will have caused food waste that will see significant perishables lost / cost.
- Stores and their logistics suppliers / teams generally secured alternative supply routes and options as the number of days grew last week. However, this came at a cost of out of stocks in store, and added in-bound transportation costs.
- Members are still calculating the costs from last week, but in the bigger picture it was manageable as customers shifted to other options (hopefully), and added transportation costs last week will be blended into the total costs of running the business over an extended period.
- RCC position from media release 2 Feb:
 - Retail Council of Canada has called on provincial and federal governments and RCMP to take more aggressive action to remove the Coutts Border blockade.
 - Retailers are starting to see gaps on shelves, especially with perishable items and seasonal items.
 - It is too early to put a dollar figure on the impact.
 - A ripple effect will begin to spread to other prairie provinces.
- SouthGrow Regional Economic Development Alliance report:
 - The current trucker protests outside the Town of Coutts, Alberta runs adjacent to the Canadian Pacific mainline that connects to the BNSF rail network in the United States.
 - This interchange between both railways is a key corridor for Agricultural, Energy, Manufacturing and Consumer sectors.
 - The protesters at this point have not sought to shut down the rail line – however there is a potential risk as the line is immediately adjacent to the Highway blockade.
 - Were that line shutdown for any extended period of time, the cost to Alberta's economy would mount quickly in the tens to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development (AFRED):

- Agriculture Operational and Market Impacts:
 - Contacts at ■■■ plant currently indicating that 1-day production day shut down will occur on Wed 9 Feb; but they will add a production day on Sat to keep the weekly volume the same. [It is not unusual for plants to shut down for a day; ■■■ previously reported a plan to shut down for one day on 7 Feb.]
 - Both Cargill and ■■■ report that they are managing to keep product flowing through the alternative border points that were being used last week, but at increased cost.
 - CFIA indicates that all other federally inspected packing plants are operating as normal.
 - High meat prices have slowed demand somewhat.
- Retail Council of Canada reports:
 - While product was a little patchy, additional routes and customer options were able to be arranged by most stores to gap fill.
 - Availability of drivers has been a bigger issue; in part due to the vaccination requirement, but more so from high COVID rates that have left an already tight situation tighter.

- Broader impacts to the food supply chain attributable to this event are unlikely to be measurable for another 1-2 weeks.

ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS:

- Fractures within the Coutts and Milk River protest sites continue to emerge. Competition between influencers has provoked some attempts to divide the movement's social media presence and exert control over collective narratives, without apparent success. Leadership of the movement appears to remain disorganized.

FORECAST:

- No change.

PREPARED BY: Intelligence Bureau, Provincial Security & Intelligence Office (PSIO)

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- **RCMP:** KDEOC//KDCAS

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